

till the 25th of March, but at night there was almost constant firing between the pickets. At most points the main lines of the two armies were within easy rifle-range, and at some points less than one hundred yards apart. The monotony of the constant cracking of small arms was frequently relieved by the firing of mortars and the dropping of shells in the trenches, calling for constant watchfulness on the part of those who were in the trenches, and disturbing the broken rest of the small remnant who were off duty. On the night of the 24th of March General Gordon's Corps was massed opposite Hare's Hill with a view to making an attack on the enemy at that point, where the lines were within one hundred yards of each other. Entrance into the enemy's works was effected just before daylight on the morning of the 25th by the Division Corps of Sharpshooters, who, with unloaded muskets, surprised and captured the enemy's pickets and entered their main lines. The 43d Regiment, with the other troops of the division immediately following, occupied the enemy's works for some distance on either side of Hare's Hill, and stubbornly held them, against great odds, for about five hours. During most of this time the enemy poured a deadly fire into the Confederates from several batteries on elevated positions, and, having massed large bodies of infantry at this point, forced the withdrawal of the Confederates with considerable loss in killed, wounded and prisoners. After this fruitless effort to dislodge the enemy the 43d resumed its position in the trenches and remained until Saturday, April 1. About 11 o'clock on the night of this date the enemy opened a furious can-

nonading all along the line. Under cover of this firing they attacked the Confederates in heavy force at several points, effecting an entrance beyond the limits of the division on the right. At daylight on Sunday morning, the 2d, they made a breach in the line held by a brigade to the left center of the division, and occupied the Confederate works for some distance on either side of Fort Mahone, which stood on an elevation about fifty yards in front of the main line. The division, massing in this direction, attacked the enemy at close quarters, driving them from traverse to traverse, sometimes in a hand-to-hand fight, till the lost works were retaken up to a point opposite Fort Mahone, which was still occupied by the enemy. Its commanding position making its recapture of importance in the further movements of the Confederates, two details of about twelve men each, in charge of a sergeant—one from the 43d (now commanded by Captain Cobb, Captain Whitaker having been mortally wounded just previously), and the other from the 45th Regiment of the brigade—were ordered, about noon, to enter the fort by the covered way (a large ditch) leading from the main line into the fort. This was promptly done, and the enemy occupying the fort—more than one hundred in number—perhaps in ignorance of the small force of Confederates, and surprised at the boldness of the movement, surrendered and were sent to the rear as prisoners. From this position the little squad of about twenty-five men poured a deadly fire into the left flank and rear of the enemy occupying the Confederate line beyond Fort Mahone, while the main body of the division pressed them in front